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The Work of Women's Organizations

Contributions to this Department will include material of three kinds: (1) original discussion, suggestion, plans, programs, and theories; (2) reports of special projects, working programs, conferences and meetings, and progress in any distinctive aspect of the field; (3) special results of study and research.

THE ORGANIZED WORK OF WOMEN IN ONE STATE

NELLIE ROBBERSON

WHEN MARY Wollstonecraft shocked conservative England in 1792 with her "Vindication of the Rights of Women," Rousseau in France with his ideas of social equality had already paved the way for the belief in the abstract rights of human beings, Tom Paine had stirred the world by championing the cause of individual freedom, and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the American Declaration of Independence had established the rights of the individual. Naturally upon a world waking up to the rights of mankind, the legal and economic position of women became a burning question. This broadening of human sympathy, this emancipation from the tyranny of tradition opened up a new world to women who had suffered from the oppression of custom. Educational opportunities were demanded and received by women who realized that knowledge is power. The opportunity came to them through the change in the world's point of view and they were not slow to grasp it. The world became a place of life and enjoyment for them, while before it had been a place of retirement from all matters of public concern. Since the days of Mary Wollstonecraft great changes have taken place and a woman has only to prove her ability to be recognized. Limitations of sex are no longer an insuperable barrier to progress.

The one powerful agency through which a woman has been able to express her individuality is through the woman's club movement. It came into existence in America at the same time as the growth of the idea of individual freedom. As early as the 18th century women all over the country were in the habit of gathering together for purposes of sewing and reading, as

well as for attending to philanthropic and church affairs. But it was not until the 19th century that the woman's club movement was a recognized force.

One of the pioneer clubs now in existence is the Sorosis Club of New York City, founded in 1868. It had an interesting beginning as a sort of indignation meeting. When Charles Dickens came to America, the Press Club of New York City gave him a dinner which many women active in literary work were anxious to attend but to which they were refused admittance except as spectators. Their exclusion from the celebrated event led them to express their resentment by organizing a club of their own which they called the "Sorosis". In 1873 these New York women called together from all over the world a meeting which they termed a "Congress of Women." Thousands of women including many sovereigns of Europe endorsed the movement and the congress held at the Union Square Theatre, New York City, was the beginning of an "Association for the Advancement of Women" which met annually until it was replaced by the General Federation of Women's Clubs. We have the story of this first club written by one of the founders and the first president, Mrs. Jennie Cunningham Croly, in 1898. She writes in her "History of the Woman's Club Movement": "The early half of the century was marked by a crusade for the cause of better education of women. . . . The woman's club was not an echo, it was not the mere banding together for social and economic purposes like the clubs of men. It became at once, without deliberate intention or concerted action a light-giving and seed-sowing centre of purely altruistic and democratic activity. It had no leaders. It brought together qualities rather

than personages; and by a representation of all interests, moral, intellectual and social, created an ideal basis of organization, where everyone has an equal right to whatever comes to the common centre."

The general club movement in North Carolina began late in the 20th century but from the time the women of Edenton organized the famous Tea Party to the present time the movement has gradually become one of vital importance to the State. In telling the story of women's organized activities in North Carolina, an effort is being made to give recognition to their influence and the effectiveness of their work in helping to solve problems affecting the home and family, the church, the school and education, the government, and industry. The enormous extent and power of religious and missionary societies make it impossible to give deserved attention here to their work except to express appreciation of it but a separate paper later on will deal exclusively with this phase of organized woman's activities. Not counting the church societies, there are about twenty distinct state organizations under national supervision, representing about fifteen hundred local clubs composed of over 75,000 women in the state. Besides these state organized clubs, there are uncounted local clubs working independently of any state or national organization. The work of these clubs is as valuable to society as the federated clubs are but there is no way to get information about all of them, as they are not responsible to a state or national body. Some of the well-known organizations in North Carolina include: American Association of University Women, Business and Professional Women, Camp Fire Girls, Colonial Dames, Colored Women's Clubs, Daughters of the American Revolution, Daughters of the Confederacy, North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs, Girl Scouts, Home Demonstration Agents, North Carolina Branch of the King's Daughters, Federation of Music Clubs, League of Women Voters, Mothers' Leagues, Nurses' Association, War Mothers, Woman's Betterment Association, Woman's Auxiliary of the American Legion, Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the Young Women's Christian Association. These organizations are represented throughout the state by local clubs, composed of memberships all the way from ten to

five hundred. They are occupied with every branch of human activity. Those tending to influence home and family life are engaged in studying problems of home economics, health, social service, child-welfare, art, literature and music; those influencing school and education devote themselves to aiding schools, bringing about friendly coöperation of parents and teachers, originating and maintaining libraries, perpetuating the memory of the dead, giving scholarships, training for better citizenship, and the study of art, literature and music; the missionary societies devote themselves to church and religious matters; there are also clubs whose main purpose is to serve the state and government by bringing about proper legislation, educating for citizenship and influencing public sentiment for legislation; and finally, there are clubs whose main objects are to attend to industrial affairs of women, to see that equal pay for equal work is given, to attend to living conditions of working women and to establish a bond of fellowship between all business and professional women.

This article will be an attempt to reveal the activities of those clubs directly influencing home and family. From a survey of the purposes of all organizations in the state, it seems that the following are most actively engaged in discussing and improving conditions of home life: The North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs, with a membership of over ten thousand, representing over two hundred local clubs; The North Carolina Parent-Teacher Association, composed of over one hundred local organizations after a three-year's existence; The Home Demonstration Division with a membership of over ten thousand, representing over five hundred women's clubs and as many girls' clubs; The North Carolina Branch of the King's Daughters and Sons, having twenty-six circles with a membership of over one thousand, besides eight Junior Circles; The North Carolina Federation of Music Clubs, representing about twenty-five local clubs; and The North Carolina State Nurses' Association which covers the whole of the state through its ten district associations. These organizations are attempting to raise the standard of living in North Carolina through the channels of home economics, health work, social service, child-welfare work, art, literature and music. Among the poor, conditions

are being studied and every possible effort is being made to brighten their home life, whether in family or in institutions.

In home economics, the Home Demonstration Division and the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs, through its home economics department occupy the first place. The Home Demonstration work is a part of the State Department of Agriculture and is carried on by 544 women's clubs with an enrollment of 10,821 and 539 girls's clubs with an enrollment of 8,453, assisted by 108 community clubs with an enrollment of 6,096, making a total of 1,191 clubs with a total enrollment of 25,370, according to the report of the State Demonstration Agent for North Carolina. These clubs furnished a total attendance at club meetings last year of 146,646; with this huge force behind it, it is not surprising that this division does a great deal for the improvement of home conditions every year. The programs for the women's clubs include discussions of food, health, gardening, beautifying premises, poultry work, dairy work, clothing, household furnishings and conveniences, household management and income earning features; the programs for the girls' clubs include discussions of cookery, sewing, poultry, household furnishing, basketry, club encampment of boys and girls, and income earning features. Every club does not attempt to carry out the entire program but each club concentrates on the subjects in which it is most interested.

The one subject of interest to practically every woman's club in the Home Demonstration Division is nutrition, with clothing, which includes millinery, remodelling, home dyeing, plain sewing, and dress designing, coming second. The State Agent in her report says: "In 1921, 2,341 demonstrations in the care, selection and preparation of food with special emphasis on nutrition were given by home agents. Nutrition booths were established at community, county, and state fairs. Another feature of nutrition work was the better-bread campaigns which were put on in 16 counties last year." Although 1921 was a year of almost continued drought, a good record in canning was made. There were 1,816,373 cans of fruits, vegetables, meats, preserves, jellies, jams, pickles, etc., valued at \$381,747.40. There were 19,139 bottles of fruit juices filled, valued at \$6,328. The agents put on 1,194 dem-

onstrations in the preservation of foods. These figures show the vast amount of work done in the home demonstration clubs. The reports on dressmaking, millinery, household furnishings, home dairy work, poultry work, and marketing show an unabated interest in this part of the division. Twenty-five hundred and sixty demonstrations in clothing were given by home demonstration agents. Five hundred and thirty-nine club girls' rooms were improved and in 917 living-rooms the furniture was done over and artistically rearranged. A big feature in the home dairy work was the campaign for the use of more milk and the demonstrations showing the value of milk in the diet. Further mention will be made of this in the health work of the clubs. An interesting phase of this division is the beautification of the home grounds. At club meetings a plant exchange was established at the proper seasons and plants, seed, shrubs, and trees transferred from one farm to another.

Coöperating with the Home Demonstration Division in home economics is the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs. This organization was effected at Winston-Salem in 1902, joined the General Federation in 1903, incorporated in 1913. The motto, "The Union of All for the Good of All" summarizes its aims and purposes. The simplicity and completeness of the organization make appeal to all women interested in club work. Any group of ten women may organize for any worthy cause and become a member of this powerful body. The nine departments into which the work is cast cover the range of the average woman's interests: art, civics, conservation, education, health, home economics, library extension, literature, music, and social service. These are the channels through which the work is conducted. It is through the department of home economics with its sixty clubs that a point of contact is made with the Home Demonstration Division, reaching both rural and urban communities. This department also stresses the value of nutrition, especially properly cooked food. Many clubs started courses in home economics in the schools and established milk stations for the children. Through the activity of this department many towns have opened curb markets, for example, Fayetteville, Greensboro, Kinston, Charlotte, New Bern, Elizabeth City, Chapel Hill, and oth-

ers. All these markets give promise of being a great help to the communities in which they are operated. Other interests of this department are more courses of study, rather than isolated subjects, wholesome school lunches, coöperation in the "Live-at-Home" campaign, and the budgeting of the family income.

In health, the North Carolina Parent-Teacher Association, the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs and the Nurses' Association have accomplished great good. The North Carolina Parent-Teacher Association was organized November 5, 1919 at Charlotte, for the purpose of bringing into closer relations the home and the school, for the good of future citizens. There are now over one hundred local organizations. Parents and teachers of a community gather at the school house at intervals to discuss problems relating to the child and the teacher. These meetings are frequently of a social and recreational nature.

The Parent-Teacher Association has been instrumental in putting on the "Milk for Health" campaign in the schools. Together with the Home Demonstration Division and civic organizations they have emphasized the importance of the use of milk as a food, especially for children. One particular object is to raise the consumption of milk to a pint a day for adults and a quart a day for children under sixteen. In one town in which the health crusade has been inaugurated by the Parent-Teacher Association, a survey showed that 319 children in a school of 398 have been induced to drink milk regularly. In another community the Parent-Teacher Association worked out a plan by which the children in school could be supplied with milk every morning at their desks.

The Federation through its department of health, has done good work during the last year. They have undertaken to support a bed at the McBrayer Sanatorium in memory of Mrs. McBrayer who was chairman of the department of health at the time of her death. It is the aim of the department to have this bed used for tubercular children whenever possible and this plan has been carried out. A scheme is under way to give special study to the subject of the disease of cancer and social hygiene for the coming year. Open air schools are being established wherever they are needed to take care of the un-

dernourished children and fresh air camps are being provided for tubercular patients. Local clubs have done a great work in health. One city club has maintained a health nurse for the community from the proceeds realized from the sale of tuberculosis Christmas seals. This club has employed a nurse to undertake health instruction under the auspices of the local club and in coöperation with the county health department. They have encouraged the organization of Mothers' Leagues for instruction in the care of babies, classes in home hygiene and the care of the sick. A class for the instruction of colored girls is conducted weekly by the same club. The local tuberculosis problem is one in which club women are always actively interested. Through the influence and efforts of the department of health a specialist in physical culture will come to the state and give physical instruction in many towns. Through the exercises she gives she plans to replace old faulty habits of living with good, healthy common-sense habits of posture, breathing, diet, and relaxation. It is through the health departments of local clubs of the federation and all others interested in health matters that the head of the section on maternal and infant information works. She is making a special appeal to them to bring the work of her bureau to individual groups. Her work was endorsed by the state convention of the Federation in 1922 and the State Agent of the Home Demonstration Division has undertaken to enlist the interest of 25,000 women in rural clubs to help carry on this work. The aims of this new bureau are to hold conferences with mothers, educating them in the care of children, to organize Little Mothers' Leagues in industrial centers and to initiate this health campaign in women's clubs and other organizations. Statistics show that many deaths of children are due to the lack of intelligent care of the mothers and the head of the maternity and infancy bureau urges the coöperation of women's organizations throughout the state in dispelling ignorance and disease by giving to the mother proper educational information regarding the care of herself and baby.

It is very difficult to try to give the proper appreciation of what the Nurses's Association has contributed to the health work of the state. They are the health work. Someone has referred to the nursing profession as being the guardian

of the sick and the well alike. The State Nurses' Association was organized in 1902 when about fifteen women gathered together to draw up a constitution and a state law regulating nursing in North Carolina. This law was passed on March 3, 1903 and revised in 1917, making it compulsory to have a state license to practice the profession of nursing in North Carolina. As an organization this association coöperates with the State Health Department in an endeavor to maintain the highest standards of health. One important phase of their work is the holding of baby clinics where children are registered and carried through different tests and measurements and the mothers are notified of defects in the children and advised as to how to remedy them. At the last convention of the Nurses' Association, they planned to assist in the \$50,000 fund for the erection of a memorial to Jane A. Delano who recruited the organization of the American Red Cross for the period of the world war and who gave 11 years of service to the Red Cross without receiving any compensation for her work. Whenever there is a question of health the Nurses' Association is the one center to be relied upon at all times. The vastness of their work makes it impossible to do justice to it in a short summary of women's work.

One of the most important contributions to the betterment of home and family life has been through the channel of social service. Those organizations actively engaged in this service are the Federation of Women's Clubs and the King's Daughters. The North Carolina Branch of the King's Daughters and Sons was organized in 1890 and now has twenty-six circles with a membership of over one thousand besides eight Junior Circles. The official magazine is the Silver Cross. As soon as the branch was organized the members undertook to build a training school for delinquent boys and after much labor they secured an appropriation from the legislature and established the Stonewall Jackson Training School near Concord. The correspondence between the Daughters and the Legislature shows how determined these women were to provide adequate training for wayward boys and how the legislature willingly coöperated with them. The operation and maintenance of this school has been the pride of the North Carolina Branch since its organization and has been officially

adopted as its main work. Some of the other undertakings are the building of a memorial bridge at the industrial school as a memorial to the boys from the school who died in France; coöperation with the Travelers' Aid; working with the Red Cross, making surgical dressings, etc., aiding orphanages; nursing the sick and supporting them in hospitals; all sorts of rescue and relief work; aiding the Salvation Army; educating girls; and providing homes for aged women. One of its most recent undertakings is the erection of a chapel at Samarcand, the home for delinquent girls. For this purpose several hundred dollars have already been subscribed and it is proposed to open it to ministers of all denominations. All the circles are wide-awake and doing a great work. One circle reports: "The principal interest is the taking care of 18 or 20 old ladies and looking after the upkeep of the home. This home is our principal thought, though we have rescued quite a number of boys and girls and found suitable homes for them, furnished wood, coal, clothing and food for several needy families, sent one hundred dollars to famine sufferers and given one hundred and fifty dollars to the Stonewall Jackson Training School, visited hospitals and homes of the sick and administered to them as best we could." Another writes: "We maintain a home for seven old ladies at a nominal board. It requires most of our time and attention to look after these old ladies, keep them warm in winter and comfortable in summer." This same circle is making plans to build a new home for aged women. It is proposed to build it of brick with a capacity for 26 bed rooms, a large living room, a dining room, baths and every modern convenience. Other circles report relief of poor, visiting sick, contributing to Stonewall Jackson Training School, adopting Armenian babies, visiting county homes, relieving sorrow, sickness and distress of all kinds, making special drives for the Near East Relief, Red Cross work, coöperation with Y. W. C. A., Y. M. C. A., Travelers' Aid, and clothing orphans at Barium Springs.

The work of the Federation in social service may be counted as one of its most important contributions to the state. Child-welfare, Samarcand, Near East Relief, friendly coöperation with ex-service men, county detention homes and supporting French and Belgian orphans are some

of the interests. This organization together with the Parent-Teacher Association coöperates with the state chairman of the bureau of child welfare. They are striving to bring about a day when every individual in North Carolina shall have the fullest opportunity for complete self-development and self-expression. The state director of the child welfare division is looking to the women's clubs to help support the state's 2,500 dependent children now in institutions and to save those not in any state home, and the women's clubs throughout the state are gladly responding. County detention homes are springing up in North Carolina and are being assisted by the women's clubs. One club in the state gave up its annual reception and donated the money saved, about \$100, to its county detention home where wayward boys are taken care of. Another pride of the Federation is Samarcand, the home for delinquent girls. It was largely through the work of the chairman of the legislative committee of the State Federation that the bill creating Samarcand was passed. Coöperating with superintendents of public welfare, they are doing all they can for the delinquent girls and their problems.

(CONTINUED IN THE JANUARY JOURNAL)

THE SOCIAL PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

GERTRUDE WEIL

THE NATIONAL LEAGUE of Women Voters is an organization of women who wish not only to vote but to use their votes to the best advantage—for the public good as well as for the protection of their own rights.

Its purpose is to develop the woman citizen into an intelligent and self-directing voter and to turn her vote toward constructive social ends.

To put this purpose into effect the League has established three principal departments of work: (1) Training for Citizenship, (2) Legislation, and (3) Efficiency in Government.

(1) Believing in an informed electorate the League aims to train women in the duties of citizenship, the principles and machinery of government, and a knowledge of conditions and problems. Through its state and local branches

the National League aims to develop a system of such training on a nation-wide scale.

(2) The League provides means by which women voters, irrespective of party affiliation, can bring their united influence to bear toward the passage of legislation which embodies the woman's point of view. The woman power in the electorate, welded together as a distinct force, is directed toward the accomplishment of definite results. The legislative program is based on a careful survey of conditions by the several standing committees and submitted to the membership of the League. The League believes that legislation should be the result of a demand that is genuine and widespread, a demand based on conviction after hearing all sides of the question, and having, therefore, the determination to persevere until the object is gained.

(3) It too often happens that the machinery of our government is controlled by powerful and selfish minorities. The League believes that the methods of taking votes, nominating candidates, writing platforms, securing legislation, and administering government must be improved to make them more responsive and responsible to public opinion. This is a prime concern of the League of Women Voters, because no other group of women is organized for this purpose and because, since women are newly enfranchised and bound by no entanglements of political precedent or mental habit, they can approach the subject freely and fairly.

The League believes that women are a distinct element in the electorate, but does not believe in a separate woman's political party; rather that women and men have a common stake in civilization, a common interest in good government, and should form a coöperating party of the body politic.

The League urges its members to enroll in the political parties, believing that the average citizen can best function through a party, since ours is a party form of government. The League holds, however, that a citizen's duty is to country first and to party second, that a party is only a means to an end, and that the end should be kept constantly in view. The women of the League do not believe in giving their consciences into the keeping of a political party, but rather that they owe it to the party to help it keep abreast of enlightened public opinion.